851 families more. This is the menu of a christening feast: beef
[262] soup, boiled meat, cabbage with pork, chicken soup with noodles, a milk pap with butter or honey, or sprinkled with sugar; «paprika» chicken, fried sweets and naturally wine. In many places each guest contributes something to the christening feast: the godmother especially is literally weighed down by the amount of sweets she provides. She gives five or six cakes the size of a mill-stone, as we described them above, four round cakes, six poppy, four cheese and four plum cakes, other poppy cakes and one bottle of wine. All this is heavy enough for one weak woman . . .

At the end of supper the child is put on the table for a little while in beautifully clean swaddles and then everyone gives something for the babe; if it is a boy, this is called «spur money», if it is a girl, «skirt money».

608 But the godmother has not finished her duties when she has carried her heavy load to the christening supper: she has still to produce her godmother present. In many places this may be done within a year after the birth. Amongst the Palóc this is a girl's due: — a red Cashmir kerchief, a linen skirt, a frilled linen shirt, with its shoulder and front beautifully embroidered, (the godmother has to embroider it herself) silk ribbons for shirts. This is for the boy: — a frilled, embroidered linen shirt, a waist coat with innumerable buttons, a round hat with ribbons. This is the boy's first outfit when he begins to walk.

851 A few weeks after the christening feast the Palóc and the Matyó women go to be «churched». The young mother puts on her best clothes, takes the babe on her arm, covers the child with ten to fifteen coloured kerchiefs, — this is also the custom at the baptism, — and goes to be «churched», thanking Got that «He blessed her house with such joy».

• 774 It is wise to hurry with the baptism, because so long as the babe is unchristened the devil easily gets hold of it,

774 and exchanges his own child for it. Such a child is called «changed», «changed child». Of course it can be changed back, but that is a difficult, heavy, complicated task and is not always successful. Therefore it is best to hurry up with the baptism so that such troubles may be avoided.

775 Of course the most ghastly thing for a wretched mother is that her child should die without being christened. The Matyós believe that the soul of the unfortunate child in this plight wanders about miserably, and each seventh year appears in some bush or hedge, until some good soul takes pity on it. The person who sees such an unchristened soul in the place mentioned, must take pity on it and throw a white cloth at it saying : — «I christen you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ; if you are a boy your name shall be Adam, if you are a girl it shall be Eve !» — After this the erring soul is immediately freed, turns into an angel and the Gates of Heaven are opened before it.

Hungarian Minstrels

(The Regös)

533 Minstrelsy is the remnant of a pagan custom, which is at least two thousand years old. In Hungary we find many minstrel practices which have never existed amongst minstrels in other parts of Europe. If the original meaning of an ancient custom gets obliterated, it is of no importance whether something is added to or taken away from it. Thus fragments alone remain. In one instance parts of the words have remained intact, in another traditions of pagan times haunt the tune, in a third the costumes of the performers reveal the ancient custom, or lastly the ancient, primitive human soul

764 the dieing man lies in the courtyard, and his favourite horse is led up to him to bid him a sad fare well... In other parts the dead man's most precious animals, his horses and his oxen, accompany him on his last journey...

[774] While the dead person is in the house, it is neither swept, nor is a fire laid, for fear that his soul might return. The mirror is covered, because a thousand evils might follow from the dead mans reflection in it...

Old men carve in advance their coffin, the gravestone or cross for themselves and also for their wives. Their neighbours dig their eternal resting place for them. In some parts the dead farmer's best friends carve his cross from the finest tree of his yard, decorating it with all kinds of ornaments and inscriptions in verse.

When the sad news has spread round, people come in streams to see the dead man; they praise his fine character, his kind heart, or at least the courage with which he endured his suffering. A black flag flies on the front of the house, or the coffin-lid hangs on its wall facing the street; in the evening candles burn in its window as a sign of death being present. Pain and consternation keep a vigil while darkness covers the abode of mourning. Relations, neighbours and friends also come to take a share in the vigil; pain gets less acute, the mood lighter as night gets darker, every now and then even a joke is cracked. At midnight everything is silenced and the night, like a black cloth, enwraps the mournful house.

Next morning the wailing for the dead starts all over again. The ancient melody, its rhythm and words regulated merely by dutiful manners and the fluctuations of suffering, resounds without rhyme or cadence: «What were you to me, what were you for me... you were my everything, my providence, by beloved dear husband... Off you went, leaving me here, alone... Who is going to